

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 617

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S E C R E T SAIGON 7052

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJECT: ALLEGATION THAT LTG NGO QUANG TRUONG HAS JOINED
THE DEMOCRACY PARTY

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL DANANG BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

DANANG 441

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT VS

SUBJ: ALLEGATION THAT LTG NGO QUANG TRUONG HAS JOINED
THE DEMOCRACY PARTY

REF: SAIGON 4852 AND 6486

1. WE CAN NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY ALLEGATION (CONTAINED
REFTEL A) THAT GENERAL TRUONG HAS JOINED THE DP. BASED
ON CONVERSATIONS WITH TRUONG PERSONALLY AND WITH OTHER
VIETNAMESE CLOSE TO QUESTION, HOWEVER, OUR GUESS
IS THAT HE HAS NOT JOINED.

2. DANANG DP CHAIRMAN PHAM NGOC VINH TOLD CONGEN POLOFF
APRIL 20 THAT, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, LTG TRUONG
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HAS NOT JOINED DP. VINH ADDED THAT IT WOULD BE GREAT MISTAKE FOR DP TO ENLIST TRUONG, WHO IS WELL KNOWN FOR HIS DISINCLINATION TO BECOME INVOLVED IN POLITICS. TRUONG'S ADHERENCE TO THE DP WOULD NOT ADD TO PARTY'S PRESTIGE BUT WOULD BE LIKELY TO CAUSE ONLY FURTHER RESENTMENT OF THE DP. " THERE ARE MANY ARVN OFFICERS UNDER TRUONG WHO ARE AFFILIATED WITH OTHER PARTIES," VINH EXPLAINED. " IF TRUONG NOW JOINED THE DP, IT WOULD ONLY CAUSE SUSPECTION AND DISSENTION AMONG HIS SUBORDINATES." VINH, HOWEVER, ALLUDED (AS HE HAS IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS) TO EXISTENCE OF A SPECIAL DP CHAPTER FOR HIGH RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS, BUT CLAIMED THAT THIS WAS NOT WITHIN HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

3. IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN POLOFF OFFICER APRIL 20, LTC NGUYEN KIM TUAN (DUY LAM), I CORPS STAFF OFFICER AND RELATIVE BY MARRIAGE TO TRUONG, DENIED THAT TRUONG HAS JOINED THE DP. TUAN NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH SENIOR ARVN OFFICERS IN THE OTHER THREE MILITARY REGIONS HAVE BEEN URGED TO JOIN, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PRESSURE EXERTED ON TRUONG AND OTHER OFFICERS IN MR I. TUAN RESTATED WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW, THAT TRUONG IS NOT ONLY DISINTERESTED IN BUT HAS A DISTASTE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES. TIAN ADDED THAT AS A JUNIOR OFFICER TRUONG HAD HAD SEVERAL BAD EXPERIENCES WITH SUPERIORS WHO WERE EITHER REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET OR CAN LAO CADRE.

4. TRUONG HAS ACTUALLY RAISED QUESTION OF THE DP SEVERAL TIMES IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH CONSUL GENERAL. HIS ATTITUDE HAS BEEN RELAXED, EVEN BEMUSED, AND HE HAS SEEMED INTERESTED IN HEARING OUR DESCRIPTION OF THE DP'S ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES. HE MADE ONE REMARK WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS OBLIQUELY CRITICAL OF THE DP: IN SPEAKING OF LTC HAU, FORMER HOA VANG DISTRICT CHIEF (QUANG NAM PROVINCE) WHO WAS REWARDED FOR ZEALOUS DP SERVICE WITH THE JOB OF PROVINCE CHIEF IN PHU YEN, TRUONG VOLUNTEERED THAT HE WOULD NOT CARE TO HAVE HAU AS A PROVINCE CHIEF IN MR I AND REFERRED SOMEWHAT ARCHLY TO HAU'S " POLITICAL EXPERTISE." OTHERWISE TRUONG HAS REMAINED ENIGMATIC. GIVEN TRUONG'S OBVIOUS DEDICATION AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT PLEDGING FURTHER ALLEGIANCE TO THE COMMANDER- IN- CHIEF IN THE FORM OF SIGNING A DP

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APPLICATION WOULD BE REPUGENT TO HIM. BY THE SAME TOKEN-- AND VINH'S COMMENT BEARS THIS OUT-- PRISEDENT THIEU WOULD SEEM TO BE POLITICIAN ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE THE UNDESIRABILITY OF PUSHING TRUONG TOO HARD. IT ALSO IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE COMMANDING GENERALS OF THE ARVN 1 ST, 2 ND AND 3 RD DIVISIONS ARE FOLLOWING TRUONG'S LEAD IN REMAINING RELATIVELY ALOOF FROM THE DP.

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